

Dark Possibility by 000Unknown000

Series: [Strange Bonds \[2\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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Relationships: Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

"She could be cared for only by a man she couldn't then bring herself to hate who saw her as merely a tool and was responsible for all her pain, instead of one her loved her to death and devoted himself to keeping her safe. She could of never knew who her mother was and that she loved her, or what the outside world was like, or that it wasn't strange to be kind for the sake of kindness, or what a friend was."

El lets herself contemplate what could of happened while Mike unwittingly gets some much needed rest.

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Author's Note:

I was thinking of what else to post when I thought of this. I remember wanting to do some fics focused on single moments rather than writing anything with a detailed plot. Not sure if that makes sense, or the result fits what I was thinking, but oh well if it didn't.

The wooden planks lining the walls echoed with the blend of voices projecting from the tiny TV resting on the table across the room, accompanied by the soft, but steadily growing rhythm of raindrops falling onto the roof and sliding down the windows, leaving behind trails of distorted woodlands across the glass surface.

It was somewhere in the middle of the afternoon, but the clouds outside covering the sky in a cool grey blanket blocked out the sunlight and instead filtered out soft, white light that barely lit the dim rustic cabin. The calm and muted atmosphere interrupted only by the bright flashing colors and noise of the TV screen.

Growing bored with the already familiar drama unfolding between the characters before her, the curly haired brunette slumped on the red couch sighed and let her gaze wander back to the raven haired boy's head in her lap.

She cocked her head and leaned forward a bit to get a better look at his face, pushing some dark waves of hair out of the way whilst careful not to stir him. His black eyes were hidden underneath closed eyelids rimmed with long dark lashes, the fabric of his thin blue hoodie covering his chest slowly rose and fell with his breathing, and his hands that were fidgeting with his zipper and occasionally raising up to scratch his face, were now folded still next to his side, and his lips hung slightly parted in that cute way El noticed when he was sleeping or concentrating hard on something.

After observing him for a bit and becoming satisfied he was asleep, she carefully leaned back against the couch and with a flick of her

head, the television screen went black and silence filled the cabin, accompanied by the music of the rain outside.

She huffed, the weight of Mike's head that was warm and comforting less than half an hour ago was now making her upper legs sore and she was contemplating trying her luck at getting up to walk the dull pain out without waking him up.

She internally argued without herself, but in the end couldn't bring herself to try it. His face looked so content and peaceful, random locks of shiny hair that curled slightly at the edges falling haphazardly across pale skin, with a few strands near his mouth gently pushed to and fro by his breathe. Safe and at peace, the sight was too perfect for her to ruin.

Besides, she knew they reason why he had little trouble falling asleep. He confessed to her earlier that he's been having more frequent nightmares. Everyone has even if they choose not to admit it, including her. It wasn't anything unusual, it was nearing November when everyone's minds first filled with enough traumatic memories to last a lifetime of restless nights.

El has always felt shame when she would wake up screaming and in a cold sweat even though for now at least, her life was better. She had gained many things she never knew she needed. Loving friends and family, a real home and peace.

Everyday her mind was being filled with happy memories presenting kindness that was at times overwhelming after a childhood of constant abuse, she shouldn't still be scared and upset. Thinking about this made her feel weak and ungrateful, but Hopper was always on hand to tell her they were merely lies and that she shouldn't punish herself for not magically becoming cured of every bad thing that happened to her.

The problem with Mike is that he feels anger towards himself for his anxiety, constantly comparing his pain to El's, Will's, or anyone he thinks deserve more pity than he does.

Consequently, he bottles up all his emotions, worrying about other people's problems instead of confronting his own. Letting the

pressure build inside him until the the smallest trigger forms a crack in his shell and he explodes for seemingly no reason to everyone but his friends' confusion, who were used to how vividly he felt emotions and sometimes saw the root of his outbursts.

El has tried to convince him otherwise, but she hasn't yet found a way to get through his stubborn nature. So if he won't open up to her about his recent nightmares, then she'll at the very least let him have his nap.

She mused herself by playing with the boy's hair whilst listening to the rain, carefully running her hand through the soft locks and watching them slip between her fingers. Pretty.

She could easily not be here, she could not be sitting on a comfy couch in the home that is the warm cabin with an old teddy bear Hopper had presented to her the first time he offered to read to her propped up next to her, Mike dozing in her lap, and instead be trapped in that place, and the thought unsettled her when she had nothing to drown it out with.

What if her and the boy's paths never crossed? She could still be marched between cold, white sterile rooms and bullied into to pushing herself until her head ached so much she wanted to cease existing. She could be enduring endless poking and prodding from cold faced men in stark suits and lab coats. She could be all alone in a tiny, dark room with the only sounds reverberating between the metallic walls are her sobs.

She could be cared for only by a man she couldn't then bring herself to hate who saw her as merely a tool and was responsible for all her pain, instead of one her loved her to death and devoted himself to keeping her safe. She could of never knew who her mother was and that she loved her, or what the outside world was like, or that it wasn't strange to be kind for the sake of kindness, or what a friend was.

That all could easily of been her life, if she hadn't of escaped at the right time, and ran through the right stretch of woods, at the exact moment three boys armed with flashlights were trudging through the trees in search of their missing friend. If their paths hadn't aligned at

the perfect moment, and she hadn't let the black haired boy convince her petrified self to go with them to the warmth and shelter of his basement, she would still be in hell and not even realize it.

El let out a deep, shaky breath, she has always done her best to push back her memories of the lab, letting the looming building become a distant land in her head that almost seemed like an imaged nightmare, only ever becoming real through vivid flashbacks and relentless nightmares. The few times she let herself ponder her life before she had a real one, a heaviness would press down and threaten her bubble of happy thoughts.

But she doesn't need to consume herself with painful memories, because she's sitting on a couch in a warm cabin, with a stuffed teddy bear seated next to her, and the person who changed it all sleeping peacefully with his head in her lap.

With a tiny smile forming, she ran her lightly her fingers across Mike's freckled cheek and whispered "Thank you", like she a million times before.